

## Save The Date

Tuesday, May 5, 2015

Why, you ask? Because it might just be the most rousing 24 hours of the year for our region!

It's The Community Give and Give Local Piedmont, two discrete 24 hour online giving events, hosted by The Community Foundation of the Rappahannock River Region and the Northern Piedmont Community Foundation, respectively. *Get involved. Give back.* A gift today may benefit you, or a loved one, tomorrow.

## Thank You!

To our donors, volunteers, business community supporters and friends...thank you for your many efforts in making 2014 a great year on our journey to ensure equal access to justice for ALL! The board of directors of RLS, the staff and our clients join together in sending you our most heartfelt thanks for your continued generosity!



RLS | *Because Justice Really Should Be For All*

## RLS Helps Low-Income Senior Obtain Peace of Mind

*Gloria Ferguson, intake specialist and pro bono coordinator in RLS' Culpeper Office, assists an 86 year old client in her effort to procure life-planning documents. Though she encountered several hurdles, our intrepid client found an empowering ally in Gloria.*

For older Americans, the importance of life planning with strategic documents such as a will, power of attorney or advance health care directives cannot be overstated. For seniors living at or near the poverty line obtaining these documents is no less a concern than it is for those whose incomes provide a greater level of comfort. As the story of Dorothy demonstrates, there are many obstacles to successful life planning for low-income seniors.

Having contacted numerous attorneys to ascertain the cost of having a will and a power of attorney drafted, Dorothy summarily dismissed the idea. The fees for such work, Dorothy learned, were more than she could afford on her fixed income, and she arrived at the unfortunate conclusion that she would have to forgo the production of legally binding documents intended to simplify end of life issues and protect loved ones, a decision that can result in catastrophic outcomes.

Not long afterward, Dorothy read an article in her local newspaper highlighting the work of RLS; on seeing this, Dorothy immediately picked up the phone to see if she would qualify for our services, which she did. Dorothy's initial contact with RLS led her directly to Gloria Ferguson. Gloria advised Dorothy to gather all of the relevant information and paperwork necessary to get the process underway and then set out to find a local attorney to do the work on a pro bono basis. But Gloria did not leave Dorothy's case to chance.



**Continued From Page One**

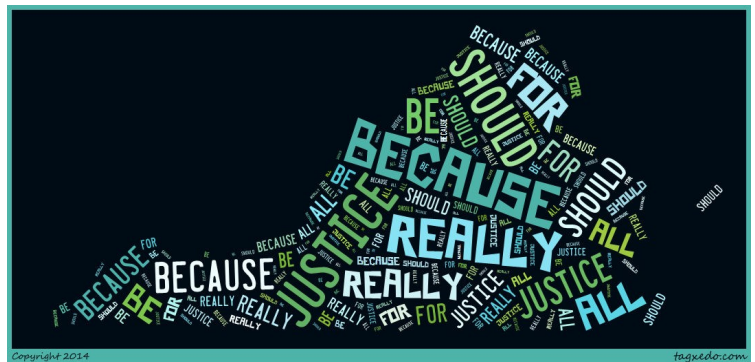
She followed up to assess the status of the case and offered to facilitate where necessary. It was then that Gloria learned Dorothy was having a difficult time securing a notary. Because she was unable to drive the distance to the attorney’s office for the signing, Dorothy visited several banks and other entities closer to her home only to find that they no longer provided notary services. Once again, Dorothy was at an impasse; she had in her possession the drafted documents, but they lacked the necessary legal force which comes into play once the documents are fully executed. This process involves signatures in the presence of witnesses all of which is attested by a notary public so that the parties’ identities are vetted, oaths are administered and competency is attested.

That is when Gloria offered to travel to Dorothy’s home, a fair distance from the office, to perform the notary duties so long as Dorothy was able to locate the requisite number of witnesses, which she was able to do. As a result of Gloria’s focused commitment to her job, Dorothy now has her life planning papers completed and she has peace of mind that these matters are settled.

According to Dorothy, both Gloria and her pro bono attorney could not have been nicer. She reported a high degree of satisfaction with the quality of the documents stating that they reflected her exact wishes, and she was quite simply astonished by Gloria’s superior efforts to facilitate the process on her behalf.

*Seniors & Poverty*

*Using the most recent census data, The Kaiser Family Foundation reports the Virginia poverty rate for seniors at 9%, using the federal poverty guidelines as a marker; if the Supplemental Poverty Measure is used, the rate jumps to 13%. The Supplemental Poverty Measure is a more comprehensive and up-to-date standard of the income needed to meet basic needs.*



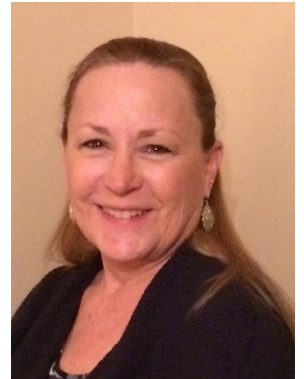
Message from a grateful donor whose relative was helped by RLS:

“With appreciation for all you do in our community. Hope is awesome and a true blessing to our family many times over. Thanks!”



## Dedication At Work Here

Teri Drakopoulos leaves RLS after more than three years as Program Administrator in order to pursue new challenges. Teri's wide-ranging skill-set, her knowledge of both law and bookkeeping and her singular tenacity in solving complex issues were tremendous assets to our organization. It has been said that Teri could squeeze a nickel out of a penny, a useful talent for a non-profit administrator. Teri's fiscal savvy as well as her many other endearing qualities will be sorely missed.



## Hail and Farewell to RLS Staff



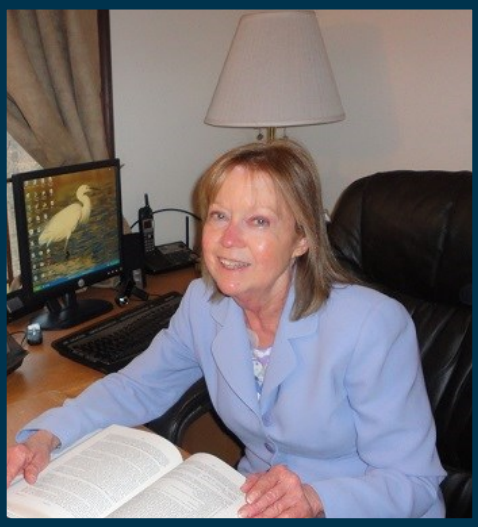
Hope Bunch will also be sorely missed. Hope leaves RLS after 18 years as a paralegal in our Tappahannock Office. She is beloved by her clients as a person of great compassion, integrity and determination. Prior to her retirement, Hope received a LASSY award at the 2014 Virginia Legal Aid Statewide Convention honoring her lifetime achievement as an outstanding advocate on behalf of SSD/SSI and public benefits clients. Congratulations, Hope! Happy Retirement!

Yolanda D. Harley, or Desi as she is known, joined RLS at the dawn of the new year. She is working in our Tappahannock Office as a paralegal having taken the reins from Hope. Desi is eager to be part of a team that empowers individuals and strengthens communities; she wants to provide her clients with timely advocacy and accurate information in order to safeguard their rights. We are glad to have you aboard, Desi!



Anne Menegalli, a 25 year resident of Fredericksburg, is delighted to join the staff in support of RLS' mission as our new program administrator. Anne is concerned about the rise in economic inequality, and she believes that legal aid is a critical service for those living at or near the poverty line. Anne is proud to be among the ranks of those fighting for equal access to justice. Welcome, Anne!

## Local Attorney Expands RLS' Reach through Pro Bono Efforts



*Beverley Liposky*

When Beverley Liposky and her husband relocated to Virginia in 1997, her first order of business, from a professional standpoint, was to become licensed to practice law here in the Commonwealth. So while she was studying for the bar exam, Beverley, who noticed one of RLS' brochures in the courthouse, decided to volunteer her time and talents in support of RLS' equal justice mission. As Beverley tells it, the research she performed in litigation support work provided an unintended, yet welcome benefit: one particular probe of a legal question fortuitously showed up on the bar exam, and anyone who has taken the bar exam can validate the sense of good fortune that Beverley felt when encountering that fateful essay prompt.

After becoming licensed, Beverley's pro bono work for RLS began in earnest. Additionally, Beverley served on the board of directors for approximately 8 years. When asked what motivates her to be so generous with her time, Beverley explained that helping our clients is a rewarding experience. She knows a little something about their difficulties. Beverley suffered abuse at the hands of her parents; as a result, she ran away at the age of seventeen to escape the violence. As a young person trying to make her way in the world alone, Beverley says she didn't always make the best choices. But she rebounded spectacularly. Beverley attended college and law school all while raising her children, which makes her a powerful role model for her clients. Though she is scaling back her caseload, Beverley still takes Guardian ad Litem cases in her own practice and family law cases for RLS. For Beverley, the implications of custody and child support cases resonate deeply. She remembers a day when there was no child support enforcement and she doesn't like to think about clients who might possibly lose their children simply because they cannot afford legal representation. Thank you, Beverley, for your tireless service to RLS and its clients!

*Want to know more about RLS' pro bono program? Visit RLS' pro bono page on our website at: <http://bit.ly/16L9bvA> to find out more. Call Brenda Born, pro bono coordinator in RLS' Fredericksburg Office, at 540-371-1105 Ext. 111; she will be happy to get you started.*

### Fredericksburg Office

500 Lafayette Boulevard  
Suite 100  
Fredericksburg, VA 22401  
(540) 371-1105  
(540) 371-1114 (fax)  
[rlsfred@rapplegal.com](mailto:rlsfred@rapplegal.com)

### Tappahannock Office

PO Box 1662,  
407 Prince Street  
Tappahannock, VA 22560  
(804) 443-9393  
(804) 443-9394 (fax)  
[rlstapp@rapplegal.com](mailto:rlstapp@rapplegal.com)

### Culpeper Office

146 North Main Street  
Culpeper, VA 22701  
(540) 825-3131  
(540)825-3802 (fax)  
[rlsculper@rapplegal.com](mailto:rlsculper@rapplegal.com)

